DISCOURSE

Which Won the Prize

of the Academy of Dijon

In the year 1750

On the Question proposed by that Academy:

Has the restoration of the sciences &
arts tended to purify morals?

By a Citizen of Geneva

Barbarus hic ego sum quia non intelligor illis.

Ovid.[1]

GENEVA

Barillot & Son

Satyr, you do not know it.

Foreword

WHAT IS CELEBRITY? Here is the unfortunate work to which I owe mine. Certainly this piece, which won me a prize and made me famous, is at best mediocre, and I dare add that it is one of the slightest of this whole collection.[2] What an abyss of miseries the author would have avoided if only this first written work had been received as it deserved to be! But a favor that was unjustified to begin with inevitably brought upon me, by degrees, a harsh penalty[3] that is even more unjustified.

Preface

HERE IS ONE of the greatest and finest questions ever debated. This Discourse is not concerned with those metaphysical subtleties that have prevailed in all parts of Literature and from which the Announcements of Academic competitions are not always exempt; rather, it is concerned with one of those truths that pertain to the happiness of mankind.

I foresee that I will not easily be forgiven for the side I have dared to take. Running counter to everything that men admire today, I can expect only universal blame; and the fact of having been honored by the approval of a few Wise men does not allow me to count on the approval of the Public. But then my mind is made up; I do not care to please either the Witty or the Fashionable. At all times there will be men destined to be subjugated by the opinions of their century, their Country, their Society. A man who plays the free Thinker and Philosopher today would, for the same reason, have been only a fanatic at the time of the League.[4] One must not write for such Readers when one wants to live beyond one's century.

Another word and I am done. Little expecting the honor I received, I had, since submitting it, reworked and expanded this Discourse, to the point of making in a sense another work of it; today I consider myself obliged to restore it to the state in which it was honored. I have merely jotted down some notes and left two easily recognized additions of which the Academy might not have approved.[5] I thought that equity, respect, and gratitude required of me this notice.

DISCOURSE

Decipimur specie recti.[6]

HAS THE RESTORATION of the Sciences and Arts tended to purify or corrupt Morals?[7] That is the subject to be examined. Which side should I take in this question? The one, Gentlemen, that suits a decent man who knows nothing and yet does not think any the less of himself.

It will be difficult, I feel, to adapt what I have to say to the Tribunal before which I appear. How can one dare blame the sciences before one of Europe's most learned Societies, praise ignorance in a famous Academy, and reconcile contempt for study with respect for the truly Learned? I have seen these contradictions, and they have not rebuffed me. I am not abusing Science, I told myself; I am defending Virtue before virtuous men. Integrity is even dearer to good People than erudition to Scholars. What then have I to fear? The enlightenment[8] of the Assembly that listens to me? I admit such a fear; but it applies to the construction of the discourse and not to the sentiment of the Orator. Equitable Sovereigns have never hesitated to condemn themselves in doubtful disputes; and the position most advantageous for one with a just cause is to have to defend himself against an upright and enlightened Opponent who is judge of his own case.[9]

This motive which encourages me is joined by another which determines me: having upheld, according to my natural intellect, the cause of truth, whatever the outcome there is a Prize which I cannot fail to receive; I will find it at the bottom of my heart.

FIRST PART

It is a grand and beautiful sight to see man emerge from obscurity somehow by his own efforts; dissipate, by the light of his reason, the darkness in which nature had enveloped him; rise above himself; soar intellectually into celestial regions; traverse with Giant steps, like the Sun, the vastness of the Universe; and—what is even grander and more difficult—come back to himself to study man and know his nature, his duties, and his end. All of these marvels have been revived in recent Generations.

Europe had sunk back into the Barbarism of the first ages. The Peoples of that Part of the World which is today so enlightened lived, a few centuries ago, in a condition worse than ignorance. A nondescript scientific jargon, even more despicable than ignorance, had usurped the name of knowledge, and opposed an almost invincible obstacle to its return. A revolution was needed to bring men back to common sense; it finally came from the least expected quarter. The stupid Moslem, the

eternal scourge of Letters, brought about their rebirth among us. The fall of the Throne of Constantine brought into Italy the debris of ancient Greece.[10] France in turn was enriched by these precious spoils. Soon the sciences followed Letters; the Art of writing was joined by the Art of thinking—an order which seems strange but which is perhaps only too natural; and people began to feel the principal advantage of commerce with the muses, that of making men more sociable by inspiring in them the desire to please one another with works worthy of their mutual approval.

The mind has its needs as does the body. The needs of the body are the foundations of society, those of the mind make it pleasant. While Government and Laws provide for the safety and well-being of assembled men, the Sciences, Letters, and Arts, less despotic and perhaps more powerful, spread garlands of flowers over the iron chains with which men are burdened, stifle in them the sentiment of that original liberty for which they seemed to have been born, make them love their slavery, and turn them into what is called civilized peoples. Need raised Thrones; the Sciences and Arts have strengthened them. Earthly powers, love talents and protect those who cultivate them.* Civilized peoples, cultivate talents: happy slaves, you owe to them that delicate and refined taste on which you pride yourselves; that softness of character and urbanity of morals which make relations among you so amiable and easy; in a word, the semblance of all the virtues without the possession of any.

By this sort of civility, the more pleasant because it is unpretentious, Athens and Rome once distinguished themselves in the much vaunted days of their magnificence and splendor. It is by such civility that our century and our Nation will no doubt surpass all times and all Peoples. A philosophic tone without pedantry; natural yet engaging manners, equally remote from Teutonic simplicity and Italian pantomime: these are the fruits of the taste acquired by good education and perfected in social intercourse.

How sweet it would be to live among us if exterior appearance were always the image of the heart's disposition; if decency were virtue; if our maxims served as our rules; if true Philosophy were inseparable from the

* Princes always view with pleasure the spread, among their subjects, of the taste for Arts of amusement and superfluities which do not result in the exportation of money. For, besides fostering that pettiness of soul so appropriate to servitude, they very well know that all needs the Populace gives itself are so many chains binding it. Alexander, desiring to keep the Ichthyophagi dependent on him, forced them to give up fishing and to eat foodstuffs common to other Peoples; but the American Savages who go naked and live on the yield of their hunting have never been subjugated. Indeed, what yoke would one impose on men who need nothing?

title of Philosopher! But so many qualities are too rarely combined, and virtue seldom walks in such great pomp. Richness of attire may announce a wealthy man, and elegance a man of taste; the healthy, robust man is known by other signs. It is in the rustic clothes of a Farmer and not beneath the gilt of a Courtier that strength and vigor of the body will be found. Ornamentation is no less foreign to virtue, which is the strength and vigor of the soul. The good man is an Athlete who likes to compete in the nude. He disdains all those vile ornaments which would hamper the use of his strength, most of which were invented only to hide some deformity.

Before Art had molded our manners and taught our passions to speak an affected language, our morals were rustic but natural, and differences of conduct announced at first glance those of character. Human nature, basically, was no better, but men found their security in the ease of seeing through each other, and that advantage, which we no longer appreciate, spared them many vices.

Today, when subtler researches and a more refined taste have reduced the Art of pleasing to principles, a base and deceptive uniformity prevails in our morals, and all minds seem to have been cast in the same mold. Incessantly politeness requires, propriety demands; incessantly usage is followed, never one's own genius. One no longer dares to appear as he is; and in this perpetual constraint, the men who form this herd called society, placed in the same circumstances, will all do the same things unless stronger motives deter them. Therefore one will never know well those with whom he deals, for to know one's friend thoroughly, it would be necessary to wait for emergencies—that is, to wait until it is too late, as it is for these very emergencies that it would have been essential to know him.

What a procession of vices must accompany this uncertainty! No more sincere friendships; no more real esteem; no more well-based confidence. Suspicions, offenses, fears, coldness, reserve, hate, betrayal will hide constantly under that uniform and false veil of politeness, under that much vaunted urbanity which we owe to the enlightenment of our century. The name of the Master of the Universe will no longer be profaned by swearing, but it will be insulted by blasphemies without offending our scrupulous ears. Men will not boast of their own merit, but they will disparage that of others. An enemy will not be grossly insulted, but he will be cleverly slandered. National hatreds will die out, but so will love of Fatherland.[11] For scorned ignorance, a dangerous Pyrrhonism will be substituted.[12] There will be some forbidden excesses, some dishonored vices, but others will be dignified with the name of virtues; one must

either have them or affect them. Whoever wants to praise the sobriety of the Wise men of our day may do so; as for me, I see in it only a refinement of intemperance as unworthy of my praise as their cunning simplicity.*

Such is the purity our morals have acquired. Thus have we become good People. It is for Letters, the Sciences, and the Arts to claim their share of such a wholesome piece of work. I will add only one thought: an Inhabitant of some faraway lands who wanted to form a notion of European morals on the basis of the state of the Sciences among us, the perfection of our Arts, the decency of our Entertainments, the politeness of our manners, the affability of our speech, our perpetual demonstrations of goodwill, and that tumultuous competition of men of all ages and conditions who seem anxious to oblige one another from Dawn to Dark; that Foreigner, I say, would guess our morals to be exactly the opposite of what they are.

When there is no effect, there is no cause to seek. But here the effect is certain, the depravity real, and our souls have been corrupted in proportion to the advancement of our Sciences and Arts to perfection. Can it be said that this is a misfortune particular to our age? No, Gentlemen; the evils caused by our vain curiosity are as old as the world. The daily ebb and flow of the Ocean's waters have not been more steadily subject to the course of the Star which gives us light during the night[13] than has the fate of morals and integrity been subject to the advancement of the Sciences and Arts. Virtue has fled as their light dawned on our horizon, and the same phenomenon has been observed in all times and in all places.

Consider Egypt, that first school of the Universe, that climate so fertile under a bronze sky, that famous country from which Sesostris departed long ago to conquer the World.[15] Egypt became the mother of Philosophy and the fine Arts, and soon after, she was conquered by Cambyses,[16] then by the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, and finally the Turks.

Consider Greece, formerly populated by Heroes who twice conquered Asia, once at Troy and once in their own hearths. Nascent Letters had not yet brought corruption into the hearts of its Inhabitants, but the progress of the Arts, the dissolution of morals, and the yoke of the Macedonian[17] followed each other closely; and Greece, always learned, always voluptuous, and always enslaved, no longer experienced anything in her

* "I like," says Montaigne, "to argue and discuss, but only with a few men and for myself. For to serve as a spectacle to the Great and to show off competitively one's wit and one's babble is, I find, a very inappropriate occupation for an honorable man." It is the occupation of all our wits, save one.[14]

revolutions but a change of masters. All the eloquence of Demosthenes could never revive a body enervated by luxury and the Arts.[18]

It is in the time of Ennius and Terence[19] that Rome, founded by a Shepherd and made famous by Farmers, begins to degenerate. But after Ovid, Catullus, Martial, and that crowd of obscene Authors whose names alone alarm decency, Rome, formerly the Temple of Virtue, becomes the Theatre of crime, the shame of Nations, and the plaything of barbarians. That World Capital finally falls under the yoke she had imposed on so many Peoples, and the day of her fall was the eve of the day one of her Citizens was given the title Arbiter of Good Taste.[20]

What shall I say about that Metropolis of the Eastern Empire which, by its position, seemed destined to be the metropolis of the whole world, that refuge of the Sciences and Arts when they were banned from the rest of Europe perhaps more through wisdom than barbarism. All that is most shameful in debauchery and corruption, most heinous in betrayals, assassinations and poisons, most atrocious in the combination of all crimes, forms the fabric of the History of Constantinople. Such is the pure source from which we received the Enlightenment of which our century boasts.

But why seek in remote times proofs of a truth for which we have existing evidence before our eyes. In Asia there is an immense country where honors for Letters lead to the highest offices of the State. If the Sciences purified morals, if they taught men to shed their blood for their Fatherland, if they aroused courage, the Peoples of China would be wise, free, and invincible. But if there is no vice that does not dominate them, no crime with which they are not familiar; if neither the enlightenment of Government Officials, nor the supposed wisdom of Laws, nor the multitude of Inhabitants of that vast Empire were able to save it from the yoke of the ignorant and coarse Tartar, what purpose did all its Learned men serve? What benefit has resulted from the honors bestowed on them? Could it consist in being populated by slaves and wicked men?

Contrast these pictures with that of the morals of those few Peoples who, preserved from this contamination of vain knowledge, have by their own virtues created their own happiness and an example for other Nations. Such were the first Persians, an extraordinary Nation where one learned virtue as one learns Science among us, which conquered Asia with such ease, and which alone had the glory of having the history of its institutions taken for a Philosophic Novel.[21] Such were the Scythians, about whom we have been left magnificent praises. Such were the Germans, whose simplicity, innocence, and virtues a writer—tired of tracing the crimes and foul deeds of an educated, opulent, and voluptuous

People—took comfort in describing.[22] Such had been Rome itself at the time of its poverty and ignorance. Such to this day, finally, is that rustic nation so much praised for its courage, which could not be destroyed by adversity, and for its fidelity, which could not be corrupted by bad example.*

It is not through stupidity that the latter have preferred other exercises to those of the mind. They were not unaware that in other lands idle men spent their lives debating about the sovereign good, vice and virtue; and that proud reasoners, giving themselves the highest praises, lumped all other Peoples together under the contemptuous name of barbarians. But they considered their morals and learned to disdain their doctrine.**

Could I forget that in the very heart of Greece rose that City as renowned for its happy ignorance as for the wisdom of its Laws, that Republic of demi-Gods rather than men, so superior did their virtues seem to humanity? O Sparta! you eternally put to shame a vain doctrine! While the vices which accompany the fine Arts entered Athens together with them, while a Tyrant there so carefully collected the works of the Prince of Poets,[25] you chased the Arts and Artists, the Sciences and Scientists away from your walls.

The outcome showed this difference. Athens became the abode of civility and good taste, the country of Orators and Philosophers. The elegance of Buildings there corresponded to that of the language. Marble and canvas, animated by the hands of the most skillful Masters, were seen everywhere. From Athens came those astonishing works that will serve as models in all corrupt ages. The Picture of Lacedaemon is less brilliant. "There," said other Peoples, "men are born virtuous and the very air of the Country seems to instill virtue." Of its inhabitants nothing is left to us except the memory of their heroic actions. Should such monuments be worth less to us than the curious statues Athens has left us?[26]

Some wise men, it is true, resisted the general torrent and kept themselves from vice while dwelling with the Muses. But listen to the judg-

* I dare not speak of those happy Nations which do not even know by name the vices we have so much trouble repressing, those savages in America whose simple and natural regulations Montaigne does not hesitate to prefer not only to the Laws of Plato, but even to everything Philosophy could ever imagine as most perfect for the government of Peoples. He cites numerous striking examples for anyone who would know how to appreciate them. But just think, he says, they don't wear pants!"[23]

** In good faith, will someone tell me what opinion the Athenians themselves must have had concerning eloquence when they so carefully kept it away from that upright Tribunal against whose Judgments the Gods themselves never appealed? What did the Romans think of medicine when they banished it from their Republic? And when a remnant of humanity brought the Spanish to forbid their Lawyers to enter America, what idea must they have had of Jurisprudence? Could one not say that they believed they atoned, by this one Act, for all the evils they had caused those unfortunate Indians.[24]

ment that the first and most unhappy of them made of the Learned men and Artists of his time.

"I examined the Poets," he says, "and I consider them to be men whose talent deceives themselves and others, who claim to be wise men, who are taken to be such, and who are nothing of the kind.

"From Poets," continues Socrates, "I turned to Artists. No one knew less of the Arts than I; no one was more convinced that Artists possessed some very beautiful secrets. However, I perceived that their condition is no better than that of the Poets, and that they are all under the same prejudice. Because the most skillful among them excel in their Specialty, they consider themselves the wisest of men. This presumption altogether tarnished their knowledge in my eyes. So it was that, putting myself in the place of the Oracle and asking myself which I would rather be, what I am or what they are, to know what they have learned or to know that I know nothing, I answered myself and the God: I want to remain what I am.

"We do not know, neither the Sophists, nor the Poets, nor the Orators, nor the Artists, nor I, what is the true, the good, and the beautiful. But between us there is this difference: although those men know nothing, they all think they know something; whereas, if I know nothing, at least I am not in doubt of it. Hence all that superior wisdom attributed to me by the oracle reduces itself solely to my firm conviction that I am ignorant of what I do not know."[27]

There you have the Wisest of men according to the Judgment of the Gods and the most learned Athenian according to the opinion of all Greece, Socrates, Eulogizing ignorance. Can it be believed that if he were reborn among us, our Learned men and Artists would make him change his mind? No, Gentlemen, this just man would continue to scorn our vain Sciences; he would not help to enlarge that mass of books by which we are flooded from all sides; and, as he did before, he would leave behind to his disciples and our Posterity no other precept than the example and memory of his virtue. Thus is it noble to teach men!

What Socrates had begun in Athens, Cato the Elder[28] continued in Rome, inveighing against those cunning and subtle Greeks who seduced the virtue and enervated the courage of his fellow citizens. But the Sciences, Arts, and dialectic again prevailed: Rome was filled with Philosophers and Orators; military discipline was neglected, agriculture was scorned, Sects were embraced and the Fatherland forgotten. The sacred names of liberty, disinterestedness, obedience to Laws were replaced by the names of Epicurus, Zeno, Arcesilaus.[29] "Since Learned men have begun to appear among us," said their own philosophers, "good People

have been eclipsed."[30] Until then, the Romans had been content to practice virtue; all was lost when they began to study it.

O Fabricius! What would your noble soul have thought if, restored to life to your own misfortune, you had seen the pompous appearance of that Rome saved by your valor and better glorified by your worthy name than by all its conquests? "Gods," you would have said, "what has become of those thatched roofs and those rustic hearths where moderation and virtue used to dwell? What disastrous splendor has succeeded Roman simplicity? What is this strange language? What are these effeminate morals? What is the meaning of these statues, these Paintings, these buildings? Madmen, what have you done? Have you, the Masters of Nations, made yourselves slaves of the frivolous men you conquered? Are these Rhetoricians who govern you? Is it to enrich Architects, Painters, Sculptors, and Comedians that you watered Greece and Asia with your blood? Are the spoils of Carthage the booty of a flute player? Romans, hasten to tear down these Amphitheatres, break these marble statues, burn these paintings, chase out these slaves who subjugate you and whose fatal arts corrupt you. Let other hands win fame by vain talents; the only talent worthy of Rome is that of conquering the world and making virtue reign in it. When Cineas took our Senate for an Assembly of Kings,[31] he was dazzled neither by vain pomp nor by affected elegance. He did not hear that frivolous eloquence which is the study and charm of futile men. What then did Cineas see of such majesty? O Citizens, he saw a sight that could never be produced by your wealth or all your arts, the most noble sight that has ever appeared beneath the heavens, the Assembly of two hundred virtuous men, worthy of commanding Rome and governing the Earth."

But let us leap over the interval of space and time and see what has happened in our countries and under our own eyes; or rather, let us set aside odious pictures which would offend our delicacy, and spare ourselves the trouble of repeating the same things under different names. It was not in vain that I called up the shade of Fabricius; and what did I make that great man say that I might not have put into the mouth of Louis XII or Henry IV?[32] Among us, it is true, Socrates would not have drunk the hemlock; but he would have drunk from an even more bitter cup: insulting ridicule and scorn a hundred times worse than death.

Behold how luxury, licentiousness, and slavery have in all periods been punishment for the arrogant attempts we have made to emerge from the happy ignorance in which eternal wisdom had placed us. The heavy veil with which she covered all her operations seemed to warn us adequately that she did not destine us for vain studies. Is there even one of her

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lessons from which we have known how to profit, or which we have neglected with impunity? Peoples, know once and for all that nature wanted to keep you from being harmed by science just as a mother wrests a dangerous weapon from her child's hands; that all the secrets she hides from you are so many evils from which she protects you, and that the difficulty you find in educating yourselves is not the least of her benefits. Men are perverse; they would be even worse if they had the misfortune to be born learned.

How humiliating for humanity are these reflections! How mortified our pride must be! What! could probity be the daughter of ignorance? Could science and virtue be incompatible? What conclusions might not be drawn from these prejudices? But to reconcile these apparent contradictions it is only necessary to examine closely the vanity and emptiness of those proud titles that dazzle us, and that we so freely give to human learning. Let us therefore consider the Sciences and Arts in themselves. Let us see what must result from their progress; and let us no longer hesitate to agree on all points where our reasoning will be found to coincide with historical inductions.

Second Part

It was an ancient tradition, passed from Egypt to Greece, that a God who was hostile to the tranquillity of mankind was the inventor of the sciences.* [33] What must the Egyptians themselves, in whose country the sciences were born, have thought of them? They were able to see at first hand the sources that produced them. In fact, whether one leafs through the annals of the world or supplements uncertain chronicles with philosophic research, human learning will not be found to have an origin corresponding to the idea we like to have of it. Astronomy was born from superstition; Eloquence from ambition, hate, flattery, and falsehood; Geometry from avarice; Physics from vain curiosity; all, even Moral philosophy, from human pride. Thus the Sciences and Arts owe their birth to our vices; we would be less doubtful of their advantages if they owed it to our virtues.

The defect of their origin is recalled to us only too clearly in their objects. What would we do with Arts without the luxury that nourishes them? Without the injustices of men, what purpose would Jurisprudence serve? What would History become, if there were neither Tyrants nor

*The allegory in the fable of Prometheus is easily seen; and it does not seem that the Greeks who riveted him on the Caucasus thought any more favorably of him than did the Egyptians of their God Thoth. "The satyr," an ancient fable relates, "wanted to kiss and embrace fire the first time he saw it; but Prometheus cried out to him: Satyr, you will mourn the beard on your chin, for fire burns when one touches it." [34] This is the subject of the frontispiece.[35]

Wars nor Conspirators? In a word, who would want to spend his life in sterile speculations if each of us, consulting only the duties of man and the needs of nature, had time for nothing except his Fatherland, the unfortunate, and his friends? Are we destined then to die fixed to the edge of the well where the truth has hidden?[36] This reflection alone should rebuff, from the outset, any man who would seriously seek to educate himself by the study of Philosophy.

What dangers there are! What false paths when investigating the Sciences! How many errors, a thousand times more dangerous than the truth is useful, must be surmounted in order to reach the truth? The disadvantage is evident, for falsity is susceptible of infinite combinations, whereas truth has only one manner of being. Besides, who seeks it sincerely? Even with the best intentions, by what signs is one certain to recognize it? In this multitude of different sentiments, what will be our *Criterium* in order to judge it properly?* And hardest of all, if by luck we finally find it, who among us will know how to make good use of the truth?

If our sciences are vain in the object they have in view, they are even more dangerous in the effects they produce. Born in idleness, they nourish it in turn; and irreparable loss of time is the first injury they necessarily cause society. In politics as in morality, it is a great evil to fail to do good, and every useless citizen may be considered a pernicious man. Answer me then, illustrious Philosophers—you who taught us in what proportions bodies attract each other in a vacuum; what are, in the orbits of planets, the ratios of areas covered in equal time intervals; what curves have conjugate points, points of inflexion, and cusps; how man sees everything in God; how soul and body could be in harmony, like two clocks, without communicating; which stars could be inhabited; what insects breed in an extraordinary manner[37]—answer me, I say, you from whom we have received so much sublime knowledge: had you taught us none of these things, would we consequently be fewer in number, less well governed, less formidable, less flourishing or more perverse? Reconsider, then, the importance of your products; and if the works of the most enlightened of our learned men and our best Citizens provide us with so little that is useful, tell us what we must think of that crowd of obscure Writers and idle men of Letters who uselessly consume the substance of the State.

Did I say idle? Would God they really were! Morals would be

*The less one knows, the more he thinks he knows. Did the Peripatetics have doubts about anything? Did Descartes not construct the Universe with cubes and vortices? And even today, is there in Europe any trivial Physicist who does not boldly explain the profound mystery of electricity, which will perhaps be forever the despair of true Philosophers?

healthier and society more peaceful. But these vain and futile declaimers go everywhere armed with their deadly paradoxes, undermining the foundations of faith, and annihilating virtue. They smile disdainfully at the old-fashioned words of Fatherland and Religion, and devote their talents and Philosophy to destroying and debasing all that is sacred among men. Not that at bottom they hate either virtue or our dogmas; they are enemies of public opinion, and to bring them to the foot of altars it would suffice to send them among Atheists. O passion to gain distinction, of what are you not capable?

The misuse of time is a great evil. Other evils that are even greater accompany Letters and Arts. Luxury, born like them from the idleness and vanity of men, is such an evil. Luxury rarely develops without the sciences and arts, and they never develop without it. I know that our Philosophy, always rich in peculiar maxims, holds contrary to the experience of all centuries that luxury produces the splendor of States; but having forgotten the necessity for sumptuary laws, will our philosophy still dare deny that good morals are essential to the stability of Empires, and that luxury is diametrically opposed to good morals? Granted that luxury is a sure sign of wealth; that it even serves, if you like, to increase wealth. What conclusion must be drawn from this paradox so worthy of our time; and what will become of virtue when one must get rich at any price? Ancient Political thinkers incessantly talked about morals and virtue, those of our time talk only of business and money. One will tell you that in a given country a man is worth the price he would fetch in Algiers; another, following this calculation, will discover some countries where a man is worth nothing and others where he is worth less than nothing.[38] They evaluate men like herds of cattle. According to them a man is worth no more to the State than the value of his domestic consumption. Thus one Sybarite would have been worth at least thirty Lacedaemonians. Guess, then, which of these two republics, Sparta or Sybaris, was subjugated by a handful of peasants and which made Asia tremble.

The Monarchy of Cyrus was conquered with thirty thousand men by a Prince who was poorer than the least significant Persian Satrap; and the Scythians, the most miserable of Peoples, successfully resisted the most powerful Monarchs of the Universe. Two famous republics competed for World Empire: one of them was very rich, the other had nothing, and it was the latter which destroyed the former. The Roman Empire, in turn, after devouring all the wealth of the Universe, was the prey of people who did not even know what wealth was. The Franks conquered the Gauls, and the Saxons England, with no other treasures than

their bravery and poverty. A group of poor Mountaineers, whose greed was limited to a few sheepskins, after taming Austrian pride crushed that opulent and formidable House of Burgundy which made Europe's Potentates tremble. Finally, all the power and wisdom of the successor of Charles V, supported by all the treasures of the Indies, were shattered by a handful of herring-fishers.[39] Let our political thinkers deign to suspend their calculations in order to think over these examples, and let them learn for once that with money one has everything, except morals and Citizens.

Precisely what, then, is at issue in this question of luxury? To know whether it is more important for Empires to be brilliant and transitory or virtuous and durable. I say brilliant, but with what luster? Ostentatious taste is rarely combined in the same souls with the taste for honesty. No, it is not possible that Minds degraded by a multitude of futile concerns could ever rise to anything great, and even if they should have the strength, the courage would be lacking.

Every Artist wants to be applauded. The praises of his contemporaries are the most precious part of his reward. What will he do to obtain praise, therefore, if he has the misfortune to be born among a People and at a time when the Learned, having themselves become fashionable, have enabled frivolous youth to set the tone; when men have sacrificed their taste to the Tyrants of their liberty* when, because one of the sexes dares approve only what is suited to the weakness of the other, masterpieces of dramatic Poetry are dropped and marvels of harmony rejected.[41] What will an artist do, Gentlemen? He will lower his genius to the level of his time, and will prefer to compose ordinary works which are admired during his lifetime instead of marvels which would not be admired until long after his death. Tell us, famed Arouet,[42] how many vigorous and strong beauties have you sacrificed to our false delicacy, and how many great things has the spirit of gallantry, so fertile in small things, cost you?

Thus the dissolution of morals, a necessary consequence of luxury, leads in turn to the corruption of taste. And if, by chance, among the men distinguished by their talents, there is one who has firmness in his soul and refuses to yield to the genius of his times and disgrace himself by childish works, woe to him. He will die in poverty and oblivion.

*I am very far from thinking that this ascendancy of women is in itself an evil. It is a gift given them by nature for the happiness of the human Race. Better directed, it could produce as much good as today it does harm. We do not adequately suspect the advantages that would result for society if a better education were given to that half of the human Race which governs the other. Men will always be what is pleasing to women; therefore if you want them to become great and virtuous, teach women what greatness of soul and virtue are. The reflections occasioned by this subject and made long ago by Plato greatly deserve to be better developed by a writer worthy of following such a master and defending so great a cause.[40]

Would that this were a prediction I make and not an experience I relate! Carle, Pierre,[43] the moment has come when that brush destined to increase the majesty of our Temples with sublime and saintly images will fall from your hands, or will be prostituted to ornament carriage panels with lascivious paintings. And you, rival of Praxiteles and Phidias, you whose chisel the ancients would have commissioned to make Gods capable of excusing their idolatry in our eyes; inimitable Pigalle,[44] your hand will be reduced to sculpting the belly of a grotesque figure or it must stay idle.

One cannot reflect on morals without delighting in the recollection of the simplicity of the image of the earliest times. It is a lovely shore, adorned by the hands of nature alone, toward which one incessantly turns one's eyes and from which one regretfully feels oneself moving away. When innocent and virtuous men enjoyed having Gods as witnesses of their actions, they lived together in the same huts; but soon becoming evil, they tired of these inconvenient spectators and relegated them to magnificent Temples. Finally, they chased the Gods out in order to live in the Temples themselves, or at least the Temples of the Gods were no longer distinguishable from the houses of the citizens. This was the height of depravity, and vices were never carried further than when they could be seen, so to speak, propped up on columns of marble, and engraved on corinthian capitals at the entry of Great men's Palaces.

While living conveniences multiply, arts are perfected and luxury spreads, true courage is enervated, military virtues disappear, and this too is the work of the sciences and of all those arts which are exercised in the shade of the study. When the Goths ravaged Greece, all the Libraries were saved from burning only by the opinion, spread by one among them, that they should let the enemy keep belongings so well suited to turn them away from military exercise and amuse them with idle and sedentary occupations. Charles VIII found himself master of Tuscany and the Kingdom of Naples virtually without having drawn his sword; and his whole Court attributed this unhoped for ease to the fact that the Princes and Nobility of Italy enjoyed themselves becoming ingenious and learned more than they exerted themselves becoming vigorous and warlike. In fact, says the sensible man who relates these two anecdotes,[45] all examples teach us that in such military regulations, and in all regulations that resemble them, study of the sciences is much more apt to soften and enervate courage than to strengthen and animate it.

The Romans admitted that military virtue died out among them to the degree that they became connoisseurs of Paintings, Engravings, Jeweled vessels, and began to cultivate the fine arts. And, as if that famous

country were destined to serve unceasingly as an example to other peoples, the rise of the Medicis and the revival of Letters brought about anew, and perhaps for always, the fall of that warlike reputation which Italy seemed to have recovered a few centuries ago.

The ancient Greek republics, with that wisdom which shone through most of their institutions, forbade their Citizens the practice of those tranquil and sedentary occupations which, by weighing down and corrupting the body, soon enervate the vigor of the soul. What view of hunger, thirst, fatigues, dangers, and death can men have if they are crushed by the smallest need and rebuffed by the least difficulty? Where will soldiers find the courage to bear excessive work to which they are totally unaccustomed? With what kind of spirit will they make forced marches under Officers who do not even have the strength to travel on horseback? Let no one raise as an objection the renowned valor of all those modern warriors who are so scientifically disciplined. I hear their bravery on a single day of battle highly praised, but I am not told how they bear overwork, how they endure the rigor of the seasons and the bad weather. Only a little sun or snow, or the lack of a few superfluities is necessary to dissolve and destroy the best of our armies in a few days. Intrepid warriors, admit for once the truth you so rarely hear: you are brave, I know; you would have triumphed with Hannibal at Cannae and at Trasimene; with you Caesar would have crossed the Rubicon and enslaved his country; but it is not with you that the former would have crossed the Alps and the latter conquered your ancestors.

Fighting does not always win wars, and for Generals there is an art superior to that of winning battles. A man who runs intrepidly into the line of fire is nonetheless a very bad officer. Even in the soldier, a little more strength and vigor would perhaps be more necessary than such bravery, which does not preserve him from death; and what does it matter to the State whether its troops perish by fever and cold or by the enemy's sword.

If cultivating the sciences is harmful to warlike qualities, it is even more so to moral qualities. From our earliest years a foolish education adorns our mind and corrupts our judgment. I see everywhere immense institutions where young people are brought up at great expense, learning everything except their duties. Your children will not know their own language, but they will speak others that are nowhere in use; they will know how to write Verses they can barely understand; without knowing how to distinguish error from truth, they will possess the art of making them both unrecognizable to others by specious arguments. But they will not know what the words magnanimity, equity, temperance, humanity,

courage are; that sweet name Fatherland will never strike their ear; and if they hear of God, it will be less to be awed by him than to be afraid of him.* I would like it as well, said a Wise man, if my pupil spent his time playing court tennis; at least his body would be more fit.[47] I know children must be kept busy and that, for them, idleness is the danger most to be feared. What then should they learn? That is surely a fine question! Let them learn what they ought to do as men** and not what they ought to forget.

Our gardens are adorned with statues and our Galleries with paintings. What would you think these masterpieces of art, exhibited for public admiration, represent? The defenders of the Fatherland? or those even greater men who have enriched it by their virtues? No. They are pictures of all the aberrations of the heart and reason, carefully drawn from ancient Mythology and presented to our children's curiosity at an early age—doubtless so that they may have models of bad actions before their eyes even before they know how to read.

What brings about all these abuses if not the disastrous inequality introduced among men by the distinction of talents and the debasement of virtues? That is the most evident effect of all our studies and the most dangerous of all their consequences. One no longer asks if a man is upright, but rather if he is talented; nor of a Book if it is useful, but if it is well written. Rewards are showered on the witty, and virtue is left with-

* Pens. Philosoph.

** Such was the education of the Spartans according to the greatest of their Kings. It is, says Montaigne, worthy of great consideration that the excellent regulations of Lycurgus, in truth monstrously perfect, were concerned with the sustenance of children as if this were their main care; and in the very home of the Muses, so little mention is made of doctrine that it is as if those noble youths disdained all other yokes, and, instead of our Teachers of science, could only be given Teachers of valor, prudence, and justice.

Now let us see how the same Author speaks of the ancient Persians. Plato relates, he says, that the eldest son of their Royal line was educated thus: after his birth he was not given to women, but to Eunuchs who, because of their virtue, had the highest influence with the King. They took charge of making his body handsome and healthy, and at the age of seven taught him to ride and hunt. When he reached fourteen, they placed him in the hands of four men: the wisest, most just, most temperate, and most valiant in the Nation. The first taught him Religion; the second to be always truthful; the third to conquer his cupidity; the fourth to fear nothing. All, I will add, were to make him good, none to make him learned.

Astyages, in Xenophon, asks Cyrus to give an account of his last Lesson. It is this, he says: in our school a big boy with a small tunic gave it to one of his smaller schoolmates, and took away the latter's tunic, which was bigger. When our Tutor made me judge of this dispute, I ruled that things should be left in this condition since both parties seemed to be better fitted in this way. Whereupon I was reproved for having done wrong, for I had stopped to consider suitability when I should first have provided for justice, which demands that no one be compelled in matters concerning his belongings. And he says that he was punished for it, just as we are punished in our villages for having forgotten the first aorist tense of τύπτω.[48] My Schoolmaster would have to give me a fine harangue, *in genere demonstrativo*, before he could persuade me that his school matches that one.[49]

out honors. There are a thousand prizes for fine discourses, none for fine actions. But let someone tell me whether the glory attached to the best of the discourses which will be crowned by this Academy is comparable to the merit of having founded the prize?

The wise man does not chase after riches, but he is not insensitive to glory, and when he sees it so poorly distributed, his virtue, which a little emulation would have animated and made useful to society, languishes and dies out in misery and oblivion. In the long run, this is what must everywhere be the result of the preference given to pleasing talents rather than useful ones, and what experience since the revival of the sciences and arts has only too well confirmed. We have Physicists, Geometers, Chemists, Astronomers, Poets, Musicians, Painters; we no longer have citizens; or if a few of them are left, dispersed in our abandoned countryside, they perish there indigent and despised. Such is the condition to which those who give us bread and who give milk to our children are reduced, and such are the sentiments we have for them.

I admit, however, that the evil is not as great as it could have become. By placing salutary herbs beside various harmful plants, and by placing within several injurious animals the antidote for their wounds, eternal providence has taught Sovereigns, who are its ministers, to imitate its wisdom. Following this example, that great Monarch,[50] whose glory will only acquire new luster from age to age, drew out of the very bosom of the sciences and arts, sources of a thousand disorders, those famed societies simultaneously responsible for the dangerous trust of human knowledge and the sacred trust of morals—trusts which these societies protect by the attention they give both to maintaining within themselves the total purity of their trusts, and to requiring such purity of the members they admit.

These wise institutions, reinforced by his august successor and imitated by all the Kings of Europe, will at least serve as a check on men of letters, all of whom, in aspiring to the honor of being admitted to Academies, will keep watch over themselves and try to make themselves worthy by means of useful works and irreproachable morals. Those Academies which will choose, for the prize competitions honoring literary merit, subjects suited to revive love of virtue in the hearts of Citizens, will show that such love reigns among them, and will give the People that very rare and sweet pleasure of seeing learned societies devote themselves to disseminating throughout the human Race not merely pleasant enlightenment but also salutary teachings.*

Do not, therefore, raise an objection which for me is only a new proof. So many precautions show only too well the necessity of taking them,

and remedies are not sought for nonexistent evils. Why must even these, by their inadequacy, have the character of ordinary remedies? So many establishments created for the benefit of the learned are thereby all the more able to deceive concerning the objects of the sciences and to direct minds toward their cultivation. It seems, to judge by the precautions taken, that there are too many Farmers and that a lack of Philosophers is feared. I do not want to attempt here a comparison between agriculture and philosophy; it would not be tolerated. I shall only ask: what is Philosophy? What do the writings of the best known philosophers contain? What are the Teachings of these lovers of wisdom? To listen to them, would one not take them for a troop of charlatans, each crying from his own spot on a public square: Come to me, I alone do not deceive. One holds that there are no bodies and that everything is appearance. Another that there is no substance other than matter, nor any God but the world. This one suggests that there are neither virtues nor vices and that moral good and evil are chimeras. That one that men are wolves and can devour one another with clear conscience.[51] O great Philosophers, why don't you save these profitable Teachings for your friends and children; you would soon reap the reward, and we would have no fear of finding among ourselves any of your sectarians.

Such are the marvelous men on whom the esteem of their contemporaries was showered during their lifetime and for whom immortality was reserved after their death! Such are the wise maxims we have received from them and that we will transmit from age to age to our descendants. Has Paganism, abandoned to all the aberrations of human reason, left posterity anything to compare with the shameful monuments prepared for it by Printing under the reign of the Gospel? The impious writings of Leucippus and Diagoras died with them. The art of perpetuating the extravagances of the human mind had not yet been invented. But thanks to Typography* and the use we make of it, the dangerous reveries of Hobbes and Spinoza will remain forever. Go, famous writings of which

*Considering the awful disorders Printing has already caused in Europe, and judging the future by the progress that this evil makes day by day, one can easily predict that sovereigns will not delay in taking as many pains to banish this terrible art from their States as they once took to establish it. The Sultan Achmet, bowing to the importunities of some supposed men of taste, had consented to establish a Printing Press at Constantinople. But the press had hardly begun to operate when it had to be destroyed and the equipment thrown in a well. It is said that Caliph Omar, consulted on what should be done with the library of Alexandria, replied in these terms: If the Books in this library contain things opposed to the Koran, they are bad and must be burned. If they contain only the doctrine of the Koran, burn them anyway-they are superfluous. Our Learned men have cited this reasoning as the height of absurdity. However, imagine Gregory the Great in place of Omar, and the Gospel in place of the Koran, the Library would still have been burned, and it would be perhaps the finest deed in the life of that Illustrious Pontiff.

the ignorance and simplicity of our Forefathers would have been incapable; escort to our descendants those even more dangerous works which reek of the corruption of morals in our century, and together carry to coming centuries a faithful history of the progress and advantages of our sciences and arts. If they read you, you will not leave them any doubt about the question we discuss today; and unless they be more foolish than we, they will raise their hands to Heaven and say with bitterness of heart: "Almighty God, thou who holds all Spirits in thy hands, deliver us from the enlightenment and fatal arts of our forefathers, and give back to us ignorance, innocence, and poverty, the only goods that can give us happiness and are precious in thy sight."

But if the development of the sciences and arts has added nothing to our true felicity, if it has corrupted our morals, and if the corruption of morals has impaired purity of taste, what shall we think of that crowd of elementary Authors who have removed the difficulties that blocked access to the Temple of the Muses and that nature put there as a test of strength for those who might be tempted to learn? What shall we think of those Compilers of works who have indiscreetly broken down the door of the Sciences and let into their Sanctuary a populace unworthy of approaching it; whereas it would be preferable for all who could not go far in the career of Letters to be rebuffed from the outset and directed into Arts useful to society. He who will be a bad versifier or a subaltern Geometer all his life would perhaps have become a great cloth maker. Those whom nature destined to be her disciples needed no teachers. Verulam,[52] Descartes, Newton, these Preceptors of the human Race had none themselves; indeed, what guides would have led them as far as their vast genius carried them? Ordinary Teachers would only have restricted their understanding by confining it within the narrow capacity of their own. The first obstacles taught them to exert themselves, and they did their utmost to traverse the immense space they covered. If a few men must be allowed to devote themselves to the study of the Sciences and Arts, it must be only those who feel the strength to walk alone in their footsteps and go beyond them. It is for these few to raise monuments to the glory of human mind. But if we wish nothing to be beyond their genius, nothing must be beyond their hopes. That is the only encouragement they need. The soul gradually adapts itself to the objects that occupy it, and it is great events that make great men. The Prince of Eloquence was Consul of Rome, and the greatest, perhaps, of Philosophers Chancellor of England.[53] If the one had held only a chair in some University and the other obtained only a modest pension from an Academy, can it be believed, I say, that their work would not have reflected their

status? Therefore may Kings not disdain to allow into their councils the men most capable of advising them well; may they renounce the old prejudice, invented by the pride of the Great, that the art of leading People is more difficult than that of enlightening them, as if it were easier to engage men to do good willingly than to constrain them to do it by force. May learned men of the first rank find honorable asylum in their courts. May they obtain there the only recompense worthy of them: that of contributing by their influence to the happiness of the People to whom they will have taught wisdom. Only then will one see what can be done by virtue, science, and authority, animated by noble emulation and working together for the felicity of the human Race. But so long as power is alone on the one side, intellect and wisdom alone on the other, learned men will rarely think of great things, Princes will more rarely do fine ones, and the People will continue to be vile, corrupt, and unhappy.

As for us, common men not endowed by Heaven with such great talents and not destined for so much glory, let us remain in our obscurity. Let us not chase after a reputation which would escape us, and which in the present state of things would never be worth what it cost, even if we had all the qualifications to obtain it. What good is it to seek our happiness in the opinion of another if we can find it within ourselves? Let us leave to others the care of informing Peoples of their duties, and limit ourselves to fulfilling well our own. We do not need to know more than this.

O virtue! Sublime science of simple souls, are so many difficulties and preparations needed to know you? Are not your principles engraved in all hearts, and is it not enough in order to learn your Laws to return into oneself and listen to the voice of one's conscience in the silence of the passions? That is true Philosophy, let us know how to be satisfied with it; and without envying the glory of those famous men who are immortalizd in the Republic of Letters, let us try to put between them and us that glorious distinction noted between two great Peoples long ago: that the one knew how to speak well, the other to act well.[54]

EDITORIAL NOTES TO THE *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts* (*First Discourse*)

1. From Ovid's *Tristia*, Book V, Elegy X.37: "Here I am the barbarian, because no one understands me." Since Rousseau considered the epigraph the clue to an entire work (see *Rousseau Judge of Jean-Jacques*, Dialogue III [*Collected Writings*, I, 218; Pléiade, I, 941]), it is wise to look up the source of his preliminary

quotations and compare them to the works they introduce. This quotation apparently symbolizes Rousseau's expectation that few men of his time will understand the thesis proposed in the *First Discourse*. The epigraph is, however, subtler than that: even though the arts and sciences appear to be generally condemned in the *First Discourse*, Rousseau identifies himself with the poet Ovid from the very outset.

2. This foreword was added by Rousseau in 1763, when he was preparing a collected edition of his writings. It is not certain which works Rousseau includes in this unfavorable comparison—see Havens, pp. 169–170. Although Rousseau admitted elsewhere that the *First Discourse* was poorly written (*Confessions*, Book VIII [Pléiade, I, 352]), he included it, together with the *Second Discourse*, among his "principal writings" (letter to Malesherbes, Jan. 12, 1762, Pléiade, I, 1136).

3. When the Parlement of Paris, on June 9, 1762, condemned Rousseau's *Émile* and ordered him seized, Rousseau was forced to flee the French capital. Later that month, both the *Émile* and the *Social Contract* were condemned and burned in Geneva, where Rousseau's arrest was also ordered. Having taken refuge at Yverdon, he was forced to move early in July by a decree of the government of Berne, and he settled in Motiers (where this foreword was written). In September 1765, Rousseau fled Motiers after his house was stoned; the remaining years of his life were punctuated by repeated displacements, which Rousseau often believed were necessary to avoid what he considered to be a plot against him.

4. The League (or Holy League) was an organization of French Catholics that attempted to suppress Protestants in France during the wars of religion in the sixteenth century. Formed in 1576, it ceased to be important after the victories of Henry IV and his abjuration of Protestantism in 1593.

5. There has been much disagreement concerning the location of these additions. See Havens, pp. 175–176 and Pléiade, III, 1240. Perhaps the most plausible hypothesis concerns two sentences praising the Academy of Dijon for its prize competition (p. 19) since these remarks would have been base flattery in a contest entry.

"We are deceived by the appearance of right" (Horace, *On the Art of Poetry*, v. 25).

7. Note that in restating the question, Rousseau changes it. The French word *moeurs*, here translated as "morals," poses a most difficult problem for a translator. Allan Bloom has suggested "manners [morals]" as a means of conveying the combination of an ethical assessment and a description of habits implicit in the term; see his *Politics and the Arts* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1968), pp. 149–150. We have decided against this translation in part because Rousseau uses the expression "morals (*moeurs*) and manners" (p. 51 of this volume). Although the phrase "way of life" is perhaps the best single equivalent for *moeurs*, it is awkward and does not always capture the specific nuance intended; in addition, it could be confused with the phrase *manière de vivre*, which occurs several times in Rousseau's *Second Discourse*. The range of meanings of the term can be illustrated with examples from Rousseau's contemporaries. The article "*Moeurs*" in Diderot's *Encyclopedia* gives a straightforward definition: "free actions of men, natural or acquired, good or bad, susceptible to rule and direction." In his *De la manière d'etudier et de traiter l'histoire naturelle*, published in 1749, the great natu-

ralist Buffon speaks of the need to study the *moeurs* of animals. In this use, *moeurs* clearly means something like characteristic ways of behaving. The best account of the meaning of the term can be found in the *Considerations sur les moeurs de ce siècle*, published in 1751 by Rousseau's close friend Charles Duclos. Duclos begins his book by referring to the various meanings of this word, which has no synonyms. He says that its most general sense is "natural or acquired habits for good or for bad." He goes on to distinguish *moeurs* from morality (*la morale*). The latter is a set of rules for governing behavior, while *moeurs* are these rules put into practice badly or well. Thus, "good *moeurs* are practical morality." In his article "Moeurs" for his *Dictionary of Music*, Rousseau argues that the ancient Greek concern with the *moeurs* of music was a concern with reducing to rules "what is decent (*honnete*), suitable (*convenable*) and seemly (*bienseant*)." Throughout the present translation the following conventions will be adopted: when possible, *moeurs* will be rendered as "morals." Only on occasions when this clearly is inaccurate as English usage, another term, such as "customs," will be used. The adoption of different English words to translate a given French term is virtually inescapable and is justified by the following remark of Rousseau:

I have a hundred times in writing made the reflection that it is impossible in a long work always to give the same meanings to the same words. There is no language rich enough to furnish as many terms, turns, and phrases as our ideas can have modifications. The method of defining all the terms and constantly substituting the definition in the place of the defined is fine but impracticable, for how can a circle be avoided? Definitions could be good if words were not used to make them. In spite of that, I am persuaded that one can be clear, even in the poverty of our language, not by always giving the same meanings to the same words, but by arranging it so that as often as each word is used, the meaning given it be sufficiently determined by the ideas related to it and that each period where the word is found serves it, so to speak, as a definition. (*Émile*, II, Bloom, 108n; Pléiade, IV, 345n)

8. Rousseau uses *lumières* in the sense of "natural or acquired intellectual capacity." Except for several places where it is appropriate, "lights" (the literal equivalent) has been avoided as too awkward. Where the emphasis in the text seems to be primarily on man's natural mental faculties, "intellect" has been used; when Rousseau seems to mean primarily acquired intelligence, we have adopted "enlightenment." This should not cause any confusion since the nouns "enlightenment" and "intellect" are used for no other French word (although we do translate the verb *éclairer* by the verb forms of "enlighten").

This sentence has a broad element of irony, as will be seen by comparing the *Second Discourse* (especially Masters, pp. 163–168). For example, note Rousseau's remark that "in relations between one man and another . . . the worst that can happen to one is to see himself at the discretion of the other" (ibid., p. 163). That Rousseau regarded himself a victim of partisan judges is the major theme of the *Dialogues*; see volume 1 of this series.

10. Constantinople was captured by the Crusaders in 1203 and by the Turks in 1453 (see Havens, p. 180).

11. The word translated as *fatherland* is the French word *patrie*. This word

poses some problems for translation because the most literal translation, "fatherland," is not of very common usage in English, while *patrie* is very common in French. Generally, on most occasions in which *patrie* would be used in French, "country" would be used in English. Thus, in English, "country" is used to describe a geographical area and an object of political loyalty or patriotism. In French, *pays* would be used for the former. That Rousseau distinguishes between the two is shown clearly by a statement in *Émile*, "he who does not have a fatherland (*patrie*) at least has a country (*pays*)" (*Émile*, Bloom, V, p. 473). Thus, *patrie* indicates a stronger civic attachment or obligation than does *pays*. In the dedication to the *Second Discourse*, Rousseau also indicates that, in the best cases, political allegiance is to a group of fellow citizens rather than to a place. He says that he would wish to have been born in a place "where that sweet habit of seeing and knowing one another turned love of the fatherland into love of the citizens rather than love of the soil" (Masters, I, p. 79). Also in Book I, chapter 9 of the *Social Contract*, he contrasts ancient kings who "considered themselves leader of men" with modern kings who cleverly call themselves "masters of the country (*pays*)" (Masters, II, p. 57). In short, for Rousseau a *patrie* is an object of strong obligation, is formed of a group of citizens, and involves a politics based on leadership rather than mastery. On the other hand, a *pays* is either merely a place or a political object inspiring limited obligation, not involving a strong sense of shared citizenship, and compatible with despotism. That Rousseau uses a word connected with the word *father* is noteworthy, although it should also be noted that *patrie* is a feminine noun in French. This connection comes from the traditional passing of citizenship by descent from the father rather than the mother. In addition, Rousseau clearly wishes to suggest that feelings of patriotism can be as intense as family ties.

12. "The art of disputation on all things, without ever taking a stand other than to suspend one's judgment, is called Pyrrhonism" (Pierre Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, 3rd ed. [Rotterdam: Michel Bohm, 1720], III, 2306). Compare Bayle's footnote B on that page with Rousseau's "Profession de foi du vicaire Savoyard" in Book IV of *Émile* (in the Bloom edition, pp. 266–313, esp. pp. 267–269).

13. With an oratorical flourish, Rousseau alludes to the discovery, first widely accepted in the eighteenth century, that the tides are determined by the position of the moon (Havens, p. 189).

14. This citation is from Montaigne's essay "On the Art of Conversing," *Essays*, Book III, chapter 8. For an English translation, see the edition of Donald Frame (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1958). The exception is generally assumed to have been Diderot, then Rousseau's closest friend (Havens, pp. 187–88).

15. Although several Egyptian kings had this name, the Sesostris said to have conquered the world is apparently legendary (see Havens, p. 190).

16. Cambyses II, king of Persia, successfully invaded Egypt in 525 B.C. (Havens, p. 190).

17. King Philip of Macedonia conquered the main Greek city-states in 338 B.C. (Havens, p. 191).

18. The great Athenian orator (385?–322 B.C.) was a leading opponent of Macedonian hegemony in Greece.

19. Ennius (239 to c. 170 B.C.) was an early Latin poet, and Terence (194 to 159 B.C.) was a famous author of comedies (Havens, p. 192). Thus, Rousseau dates the beginning of the fall of Rome near the beginning of the second century B.C.

20. According to Tacitus, *Annals* XI. 18, this title ("elegantae arbiter") was given to Petronius, satiric author and courtier of Nero. Since Petronius lived in the first century A.D., the "fall" of Rome under the "yoke she had imposed on so many peoples" cannot be the capture of Rome by the barbarian general Odoacer in A.D. 476. Although this event is traditionally called the "fall of Rome," it would appear that the "yoke" Rousseau has in mind is one-man rule—that is, the establishment of the Roman Empire by Augustus in the years following the Battle of Actium (31 B.C.). If this conjecture is correct—and it seems inescapable, since Rousseau speaks of the "fall" of Rome as coming before the day on which Petronius was called "Arbiter of Good Taste"—this passage serves as a carefully guarded equation of monarchy with subjection or slavery. Indeed, if one considers Rousseau's examples carefully, it will be seen that states with healthy morals were often republics, whereas the corrupt societies he names were mainly (though not exclusively) empires and monarchies.

21. Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (Havens, p. 196).

22. Tacitus (c. A.D. 55 to c. 117), especially in his *De moribus Germanorum* (Havens, p. 197).

23. The reference is to Montaigne's "Of Cannibals," *Essays*, Book I, chapter 31 (Frame, 159). Havens identifies this and other references to Montaigne in his notes.

24. Compare Montaigne, "Of Experience," *Essays*, Book III, chapter 13 (Frame, 116).

25. Pisistratus, tyrant of Athens from 554 to 527 B.C., was reputed to have been the first to transcribe and organize the poetry of Homer, the "prince of poets" (Havens, pp. 200–201).

26. Compare Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, I, x:

> For I suppose if Lacedaemon were to become desolate, and the temples and the foundations of the public buildings were left, that as time went on there would be a strong disposition with posterity to refuse to accept her fame as a true exponent of her power. And yet they occupy two-fifths of the Peloponnese and lead the whole, not to speak of their numerous allies without. Still, as the city is neither built in a compact form nor adorned with magnificent temples and public edifices, but composed of villages after the old fashion of Hellas, there would be an impression of inadequacy. Whereas, if Athens were to suffer the same misfortune, I suppose that any inference from the appearance presented to the eye would make her power to have been twice as great as it is. (Everyman's Library [New York: E. P. Dutton, 1910], p. 7).

27. For some of the implications of this paraphrase of Plato's *Apology*, see the Introduction (p. xiv, n. 10).

28. Cato the Elder (234–149 B.C.), Roman statesman known for his efforts to restore what he considered to be the pure morals of the early Republic. Note that Cato was a contemporary of Ennius, identified in note 18.

29. Epicurus (c. 342–270 B.C.) founded the Epicurean philosophic school or sect, and his contemporary, Zeno, founded that of the Stoics; Arcesilaus (316–241 B.C.) was an extreme skeptic who took the position that "nothing was certain" (Havens, p. 203).

30. Havens indicates (p. 203) that Rousseau here transcribes a sentence of Seneca ("Postquam docti prodierunt, boni desunt" [*Letters* XCV. 13]), which had been quoted by Montaigne in "Of Pedantry," *Essays*, Book I, chapter 25 (Zeitlin, I, 122).

31. As Havens points out (p. 207), the reference here is to Plutarch's "Life of Pyrrhus," which describes both Cineas and Fabricius. See Plutarch, *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* (New York: Modern Library, n.d.), 481f. This "prosopopocia" of Fabricius was the first part of the *Discourse* written by Rousseau. See *Confessions*, Book VIII (Pléiade, I, 351).

32. The irony of this rhetorical question is clear if one considers the last sentence of Fabricius' speech: neither King Louis XII nor King Henry IV would have been likely to conclude that "the most noble sight that has ever appeared beneath the heavens" was the Roman Senate.

33. Compare the story told by Socrates in Plato's *Phaedrus*, 274c–275b, concerning the origin of writing.

34. This is almost a word-for-word quotation of the version of the fable given by Plutarch, except that Rousseau neglects to add the remainder of Prometheus' advice to the satyr: "It burns when one touches it, but it gives light and warmth, and is an implement serving all crafts providing one knows how to use it well." See Havens, p. 209, and compare Plutarch, "How to Profit by One's Enemies," trans. Frank Cole Babbitt, *Moralia* (Loeb Classical Library; London: Heinemann, 1928), II, 74. On the fable of Prometheus, compare Plato's *Protagoras*, 320d-322a.

35. Reproduced p. 2.

36. The word translated as "well" can also mean a mineshaft. This saying can be traced back to Fragment 17 of Democritus, although Democritus says that the truth is hidden in the *depths*. In "On the Art of Conversing," which Rousseau cited above (see p. 7), Montaigne refers to the maxim, but renders it as "in the bottom of abysses." Further, Montaigne says that he disagrees with Democritus and suggests that the truth is elevated above us rather than hidden beneath us. Rousseau returns to this maxim in his defenses of the *Discourse*, see p. 89 below. In a comment on this passage, Gautier accuses Rousseau of attempting to reintroduce ancient skepticism (see pp. 77–78 below), and Rousseau's reference in the next paragraph to the traditional skeptical argument that there is no criterion by which the truth can be judged gives some grounds for this. The general tone of the argument at this point of the *Discourse* calls into question the very possibility of real knowledge and certainly suggests that humans have no natural tendency to pursue knowledge. It is, however, not impossible that Rousseau's choice of "well" is meant to indicate the difficulty rather than the impossibility of acquiring knowledge. With this in mind, one can recall the ancient discovery that stars can be observed from the bottom of a shaft or a well even in daytime. This discovery is referred to by Buffon in volume 4 of his *Histoire naturelle*, with which Rousseau was familiar.

37. We are indebted to Professor Joseph Cropsey for the suggestion that, of this list of scientific discoveries due to "illustrious philosophers," the first three refer to the work of Newton, the next two to Descartes' philosophy, and the last two to studies by Bacon. Compare the three philosophers mentioned by name on p. 21. More recently, Victor Gourevitch has suggested that Rousseau refers to Newton, Kepler, Malebranche, Leibniz, Fontenelle, Rèaumur, and Bonnet; see his *First and Second Discourse Together with the Replies to Critics and Essay on the Origin of Languages* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), 305.

38. Compare Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, XXIII, xvii: "Sir [William] Petty supposed, in his calculations, that a man in England is worth what he could be sold for in Algiers. That can only be true for England: there are countries where a man is worth nothing; there are some where he is worth less than nothing" (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1949), II, 114–15. The best English translation is by Anne Cohler et al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Montesquieu's reference is to Sir William Petty's *Essay in Political Arthmetick*, published in 1686.

39. In order, Rousseau apparently refers to the conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great (334–330 B.C.); the inability of the Persians to conquer the Scythians (see especially the account of the invasion, led by Darius Hystaspis in 512 B.C., in Herodotus, *Histories* IV. 118–142); Rome's conquest of Carthage in the Three Punic Wars (265–241 B.C., 218–202 B.C., and 150–146 B.C. respectively); the invasion and conquest of Rome by the Goths, Huns, and Vandals, which culminated in the "fall of Rome" to Odoacer in A.D. 476; the conquest of the Gauls by the Franks and the Saxon invasions of Britain in the fifth century A.D.; the victories of the Swiss over the Austrian Hapsburgs Leopold I (1315) and Leopold III (1386) and over Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy (1476); and finally the successful revolt of the Netherlands against King Philip II of Spain (1566–1579). These historical references are particularly interesting because of the element of exaggeration present in many of them. The first example (the conquest of "The Monarchy of Cyrus" by an army of 30,000 men under a "prince who was poorer than the least significant Persian satrap") can only refer to the ultimate defeat of the Achaemenian dynasty founded by Cyrus the Great because Persia was never conquered during the reign of Cyrus himself (although Cyrus was killed while fighting the Massagetae, a savage tribe east of the Caspian). Rousseau's statement of the event thus tends to mislead the hasty reader, who will not immediately recognize that Alexander the Great had become master of Greece before attacking Persia. Similarly, although Rome was not as wealthy as Carthage prior to its victory in the Punic Wars, the Roman republic was hardly "nothing" at the time; and the "handful of herring-fishers" who defeated Spain were the extremely prosperous Dutch, whose development of commerce and industry formed an indispensable basis for the successful revolt of the Northern Provinces of the Netherlands.

40. The reference is clearly to Plato's *Republic*, especially Book V, 451–457 (where Socrates argues that the education and activities of women must equal those of men in the best city). Rousseau later developed this theme in Book V of *Émile*.

41. Rousseau here complains about the poor taste of French (and especially Parisian) society, with particular emphasis on the growing dislike of the classical dramas of Corneille and Racine, and the refusal to accept—or even listen seriously to—Italian music (see Havens, pp. 244–245).

42. François Marie Arouet (1694–1788), universally known as Voltaire. Rousseau's refusal to cite the most famous author of his time by his pen name is, in this context, hardly accidental; to be famous in eighteenth-century France, Rousseau implies, one must put on a false front. Compare Havens, pp. 225–26.

43. Charles-André ("Carle") Van Loo (1705–1765) and Jean-Baptiste-Marie Pierre (1713–1789) were famous contemporary painters whose works were sometimes criticized by Diderot (Havens, pp. 226–27).

44. Jean-Baptiste Pigalle (1714–1785), French sculptor whose statues were in fashion at the time of the writing of the *First Discourse* (Havens, p. 228). The relative obscurity of these contemporaries named by Rousseau would seem to confirm his point that to gain fame in a corrupted society one must sacrifice those qualities that produce lasting fame.

45. Michel de Montaigne. The preceding two sentences, as well as the remainder of this one, are taken virtually word for word from Montaigne's "Of Pedantry" (Frame, 106).

46. Rousseau thus cites Diderot's anonymous work, *Pensées Philosophiques*, in which the distinction between awe of God and fear of God is made in Pensée 8 (see Havens, pp. 234–236). It should be noted that shortly after its publication in 1746, *Pensées Philosophiques* was condemned and burned by the Parlement of Paris as "scandalous, and contrary to Religion and Morals" (Arthur M. Wilson, *Diderot: the Testing Years* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1957], 55).

47. Rousseau again borrows from Montaigne's "Of Pedantry," *Essays* I:25 (Frame, 106).

48. Montaigne puns here by using the Greek verb "to strike" or "beat" as his example.

49. All of this long note, with the exception of the first and last sentences of the first two paragraphs, is quoted from Montaigne's "Of Pedantry" (Frame, 105, 123–124). Rousseau changes the order of the paragraphs, however, and makes one significant omission.

50. Louis XIV, king of France from 1643 to 1715, founded at least five academies: Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts (1648), Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres (1663), Académie d'Architecture (1671), Académie des Beaux-Arts at Rome (1677), and Académie des Jeux Floraux (1694). The first and most important, however, was the Académie française, formally constituted in 1635 under Louis XIII; *le grand monarque* (as Louis XIV was called) did not originate the institution for which he is praised. This hollow commendation of Louis XIV is paralleled by a similar instance of "damning with false praise" in the *Second Discourse*.

51. It may be suggested that the foregoing sentences allude, respectively, to Berkeley (1685–1753), Spinoza (1632–1677), Mandeville (c. 1670–1733), and Hobbes (1588–1679).

52. Francis Bacon, first Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Albans (1561–1626), who received his title after becoming Lord Chancellor of England in 1618.

53. The reference is to Cicero and Bacon. Note that Rousseau's earlier reference to the latter as "Verulam" is not accidental—compare note 52.

54. This comparison between Sparta and Athens is also drawn from Montaigne's "Of Pedantry" (Frame, 105).